

# THE **Quill**

**A MAGAZINE FOR  
WRITERS, EDITORS,  
AND PUBLISHERS**

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## Wages or Salaries?

By George H. Adams  
Editor, The Minneapolis Star

## Getting the Material

By Arthur H. Little  
Editor, System Magazine

## Shopping For a Country Weekly

By Herman Roe  
Field Director, National Editorial Association

## Decency Pays Dividends

By H. Donald Crawford  
Editorial Department, The Indianapolis News

## Four Years of Theory, Six Months of Reality

By Lewis S. Larkin  
Missouri Newspaperman

As They View It

After Deadline

The Book Beat

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# As They View It



## Government and a Free Press

By GRAFTON S. WILCOX

Managing Editor,

The New York Herald-Tribune

**T**HE obligation of the press to the welfare of the people of the United States transcends its obligation to the government. If responsible agents of the government forget or ignore this, it is the duty of a free and intelligently directed press to protect the interests of the public even to the extent of defiance of its forgetful or offending agents.

"Freedom of the press is one of the wisest guarantees of the American Constitution. The Constitution, of course, does not guarantee the abuse of liberty even by a free press, nor does it delegate to officers of this government of the people a right to imperil its institutions through secret bureaucracy or cloistered administrative intrigue. A government administration that fears publicity is an administration to be watched and God save a democracy from a cowed or fettered press.

"Administrative departments at Washington today are still suffering from lessons in camouflage, evasion, suppression and censorship mastered during the World War. No one denies that there must be censorship in time of war, but the method of censorship which the Washington government administered through the Creel committee left contamination in high places which never has been purged, and a sorry heritage to American journalism.

"After the Creel legion had been mustered out, the 'news hand-out' brigades it had created were permitted to march on in the guise of publicity bureaus in nearly every important government department, destined to exert an influence not only demoralizing to newspaper initiative in the pursuit of legitimate government information, but restricting development of frank relationship between the press and public servants and inculcating a spirit of autocratic belligerence in officials and their underlings toward the rights of the press that is utterly un-American.

"Individuals steeped in methods of submerged government operation during the war remain at Washington today, some of them in higher station than before, who never have recovered from the effects of the war-time inoculation that government is a secret business, the machinations of which should be sequestered from the prying eye of the press as zealously as the gold in the Treasury should be guarded from the thief.

"Another outgrowth of this strained relationship between press and the State which has developed from the 'hand-out' system at Washington may be termed the 'sewing-up' method for preventing the publication of news. A department head who fears the public may learn something about a given plan he is negotiating, summons the correspondents to his sanctum. In a heavy atmosphere of mystery and hush he builds up a bugaboo of calamity should the public learn what he is doing before his plans are completed. But he wants the correspondents to know what he is about if they will swear to respect his confidence. Almost before they know it they are bound and have committed their newspapers to secrecy through a 'hocus-pocus' that in a great majority of cases is entirely unnecessary and sometimes damaging to the best interests of all concerned.

"There are times when this method of operation may be justifiable, but government agents who have seen it work so effectively are today overworking it and abusing a confidential relationship that should be mutually sincere. In fact it has become a bureaucratic racket."—From the *Bulletin* of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

# THE QUILL

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A Magazine for Writers, Editors, and Publishers

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Number 2

## WAGES OR SALARIES?

An Editor Asks Whether Newspapers Are Offering  
Sufficient Rewards to Get the Men They Need . . .

**M**ANY universities have undertaken to educate men for a newspaper career. Let us look squarely at the situation and try to determine just what sort of a career that is, what sort of an education it requires and how much is justified.

Newspapers are the source of information for the world. We say that and we believe it is true. Then the newspapers bear a heavy responsibility. To justify themselves they must make sure that the world is correctly informed of its affairs, its problems and its various activities.

That is no small job. In these days of rapid development; of invention, research and discovery; of political and diplomatic problems; of social experiments and financial and industrial upheaval; all taking place in a world shrunken upon itself by the cable, the telephone, telegraph, radio, airplane, motion picture and printing press, it is a tremendous job, challenging the best fitted, most thoroughly trained men to come within a small percentage of perfection.

Now the newspaper is not a robot, taking in facts, assembling and digesting them and distributing them to the public automatically. It is the product of a group of men, of an editorial staff. The reporter and the copy reader are the eyes through which the world looks at itself, its problems, its accomplishments and its mistakes.

**A**RE they competent to do the job? They are not competent to do the job as it could and should be

By **GEORGE H. ADAMS**  
Editor, The Minneapolis Star

done. They are doing the best they can, but I do not believe any news-

### For Value Received

**N**EWSPAPERS as a whole always have received more than they have paid for in enthusiasm, loyalty and hard work, observes George H. Adams, editor of the Minneapolis Star, in the accompanying discussion of the economic status of the newspaper worker.

Mr. Adams points out that radio, the advertising field, trade publications, magazines and industries today are competing with the newspapers for good men and adds that the press needs more than it is getting of trained, soundly educated men of broad vision and intelligent judgment.

Mr. Adams began his newspaper career with the City Press of Chicago in 1904. He went to the Commercial West, a Minneapolis financial weekly, in 1906. His next move was to the Minneapolis Journal as a reporter in 1907. He became assistant city editor of the Journal in 1908, city editor in 1909 and managing editor in 1912. He continued as managing editor of the Journal until 1927, when he became editor of the Minneapolis Star.

paper man will question that it could be done better.

As an instance: This is the day of the "handout." One reason for the "handout" is the fear on the part of many men that they will be misquoted. And that fear is not baseless.

Misquotations may be due to errors caused by speed, they may be due to carelessness. But if they deal with a technical question they are as likely to be due to the lack of background and education of the reporter.

It is possible that the interview may contain the exact words of the speaker, it may contain not a single word he didn't use and yet through failure of the reporter to grasp the subject it may give the reader a complete misconception of the speaker's message.

So we have handouts.

**T**HERE can be no such thing as a perfect and complete preparation for the reporter's job. His work involves too many subjects, covers too much territory. But surely in this day and age preparation for his work could well consume as much time and be as complete and thorough as that of a medical student.

It is a common saying among "practical" newspaper executives that you cannot make a newspaper man in a university. I heartily agree with that. A real newspaper man is born to the business. But you can give him the best possible tools to work with.

And that leads us directly to the economic status of the newspaper man.

**N**EWSPAPERS as a whole always have received more than they have paid for in enthusiasm, loyalty and hard work.

Today they need more than they are getting of trained, soundly educated men of broad vision and intelligent judgment.

Today the advertising business, trade publications, magazines and many industries are competing with newspapers for the pick of that sort of men. And it is a serious question in my mind whether the newspapers are offering economic rewards sufficient to attract their share of the best prepared, best equipped university men of today, let alone to justify longer and more elaborate training than is now offered for journalism.

All this sounds like a dark picture of the newspaper business and the men who are in it. I do not mean to make it sound that way. I have spent all my life in it. I am proud of my business and of the men with whom I have worked for more than 25 years. But I do believe that they could do better work had they been equipped with better tools.

What's to be done about it?

**I**N the first place, I do not believe and would not have anyone believe that I am advocating any such thing as group demands for higher salaries. Such things carry a flare-back. When salaries are forced up beyond the going group wage there is always a reaction.

If there is truth in my argument and in my surmise that newspapers can be strengthened by better trained men and that better trained men would be available to newspapers if salaries were sharply increased, the thing to do is to convert the newspaper owners and publishers to that opinion.

Newspaper owners and newspaper publishers are not fools. They are, as a rule, pretty shrewd men who are trying to develop or at least conserve valuable properties. If they can be shown a way in which those properties can be made stronger and more valuable they will listen.

Last April I had the privilege of addressing the annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington. I told them what I have been trying to present here, but from the viewpoint of the newspaper executive.

I would like to repeat the argument I made at that meeting when I said:

**T**HE business depression, the growth of radio broadcasting in

the fields of news, features, entertainment and advertising, the tendency of advertisers (right or wrong) to assert that the pulling power of newspaper advertising is declining, the installation in many cities of advertising sheets such as the *Shopping News*, all make this a logical time for newspa-

## NEXT MONTH

**J**UST to whet your interest in the March issue of *The Quill*, the curtain will be drawn aside on some of the featured material. For example:

H. D. Paulson, editor of the *Fargo, N. D., Forum*, treats of newspapers of the Northwest in an article entitled "No 'Flash' Newspapers for Us."

G. C. Terry, editor and publisher of the *Tri-County Press* at Polo, Ill., speaks plainly to "You Metropolitan Boys—"

Richard Powell Carter, feature editor of the *Times-Dispatch* at Richmond, Va., asks "What IS Experience?"

Gurney Williams, now free-lancing in New York City, writes frankly in an article entitled "I'm Not Selling Apples!"

Donald D. Hoover, assistant city editor of the *Indianapolis News*, treats of journalism's intangibles in an article "Salary Isn't Everything."

All these and other articles, along with the regular departments, will be found in

## THE QUILL for March

per editors to find out the weak spots in their business and see what can be done to strengthen them.

"The human element is, of course, the most important element in the production of a newspaper. It takes good men to make a good paper.

"It seems to me that the first question in any inquiry as to whether newspapers are good as they might be under present circumstances is this: Are they attracting and holding the best available material for their editorial staffs?

"Are working conditions, opportunities for advancement and financial rewards in the newspaper business today such that newspapers can compete for men on an even basis with business and professions? If they are, do young men and young women now preparing for business or

professional life understand and believe they are?

"It is within the province of the American Association of Newspaper Editors to institute a thorough and painstaking investigation to determine the answers to the foregoing questions.

"Such an investigation or survey should be designed to show whether young men and women now in universities regard reportorial work and its allied activities as being economically on a par with other work open to them on graduation, whether they regard the ultimate rewards possible in the editorial departments of newspapers as attractive as those promised by other work. It should disclose the comparative economic histories of men who have gone into newspaper work and into other lines of activity. It should find out why graduates of courses of journalism have chosen jobs in other than newspaper offices. It should check up on the turnover of newspaper news staffs and ascertain the principal reasons for changes. It would be interesting to know the professional or business history of a couple of hundred mature men now on reportorial staffs or copy desks. It might be enlightening to know the reasons why hundreds of men have left newsrooms for publicity jobs and advertising offices and whether they have found satisfaction in their change.

"Such an investigation, carried out without prejudice and scientifically, could not but render a distinct service to the whole newspaper business in these changing times. While I have not been in a position to make definite inquiry, I have received intimations that universities conducting schools of journalism would be glad to cooperate in such a survey and that their activity might make possible the obtaining of funds from one of the various educational foundations.

"I have a letter from President Coffman of the University of Minnesota going into this thing in some detail in response to an inquiry of mine, and the intimation that I get from it is that if this is not started by this Society it probably will be by the universities who feel that they have a right to and should know definitely the nature of the field for which they are supposedly training men in their schools of journalism.

"I have a letter from the President of the Association of Schools of Journalism practically intimating the same thing. Dr. Coffman of the

(Continued on page 15)

# Decency Pays Dividends

By H. DONALD CRAWFORD

**H**ONEST, objective and straightforward news-handling not only is good ethics but also good business. It is a policy that brings prestige and readers on one hand and increased business and dividends on the other.

One of the best examples that such an editorial stand pays is to be found in the experience of the managing editor of a metropolitan midwestern newspaper which shall be designated in this article as *The Midland News* for purposes of objectivity.

**T**HE wife of a physician was murdered one Sunday afternoon. The physician had gone for a walk. On his return home he found the body of his wife lying on the floor. He ran to her and started to lift her, then stopped. She was dead. The physician left the body as he had found it and ran to tell a neighbor that his wife had been murdered.

This was the story he related to the court—a story that won his acquittal. Several months later, the physician committed suicide.

Therein lies our story.

The police made the usual investigation at the time of the slaying. Intense questioning of the physician featured the search for a clue. A coat he had worn at the time of the murder contained a spot of blood on the inner lining near the cuff. His shirt revealed no corresponding stain. The doctor denied the accusation that he had changed shirts. The police contended that he had burned the shirt worn at the time of the murder. A roaring fire had been found in the furnace of the home, although it was a warm day and no fire was needed.

The doctor never changed his denial of guilt. The circumstantial evidence was not sufficient to convict him. He was acquitted, but his practice was gone. Even friends were suspicious, for it had been learned that the doctor was intimate with another woman.

Months passed. With friends cool, business disrupted and mental worry overpowering him, the doctor saw only one way out. He knew that the police watched his every action, hoping that some unconscious move would reveal that he had lied about

the murder. The social and psychological pressure had become unbearable.

**O**NE Saturday morning a report flashed into newspaper offices that the doctor had killed himself, leaving a note which simply said: "The newspapers will explain why I did this."

Every editor and reporter in the metropolis knew there must be a letter addressed to some newspaper. They watched the mails all day. No letter came. Special messengers were hired to remain at the post office, with orders to rush all mail to the editorial offices. This method also failed to reveal the letter. The *Midland News* employed post-office clerks who opened all mail boxes within a radius of two miles of the doctor's office at short intervals.

## Twice Told

**S**EVERAL months ago, H. Donald Crawford, a copy reader on the *Indianapolis News*, heard the managing editor of a midwestern metropolitan daily relate what had been one of his most remarkable newspaper experiences.

So impressed was Mr. Crawford with the account, so significant was the point that editorial decency pays, that he retold the story as he heard it in an article for *The Quill*.

To obtain complete objectivity for the point that decency pays, he did not use the name of the managing editor and substituted a fictitious name for that of the newspaper involved.

Mr. Crawford was graduated from Hillsdale College and attended the graduate school at the University of Michigan.

## Fair Play in Handling a Sensational Story Brought • • This Newspaper an Outstanding Scoop • •

The expected letter was not found, and the city was in suspense, divided in its speculations regarding the contents of the hypothetical letter.

Many persons believed the doctor would confess the murder of his wife. Others speculated that he would reiterate his innocence. Interest mounted hourly. Scores of persons went to the *News* building and awaited word from the searchers. No trace of the letter had been found when the paper's last edition went to press Saturday night.

**L**ONG after the managing editor of the *News* had gone to bed that night, he was aroused by a knock at the door of his home. His callers were five reporters, four of them armed. They had the letter.

It had been mailed in a box near the doctor's office, having been dropped there by someone hours after the doctor had ended his life. The letter was written in a simple manner. The salutation had been clipped from the sheet. The name of the newspaper was typewritten on the plain envelope, which bore no return address. The identity of the sender was shielded completely.

The doctor had written: "I am not guilty of murder," and went on to explain that his act of suicide was a last desperate measure to release himself from the social ostracism and financial difficulties resulting from the death of his wife several months before.

The managing editor, in his night clothes, and the armed reporters stood silently together and read and reread the letter.

**W**HAT should be done? Did the rival papers in the city have a similar letter? Sunday editions soon would be distributed; but Sunday editions issued as extras to sell a sensational story on the streets were bad

newspaper investments. They would not pay publishing expenses.

The managing editor placed the letter in the pocket of an old overcoat hanging in a remote closet of his home and went back to bed. Precaution must be taken! Dozens of men were looking for the letter. Its value was from \$15,000 to \$25,000 in any newspaper office in the city. Its very existence must not be made known.

Sunday morning came. The managing editor telephoned the city editor and news editor of the *News*. The three met at the editorial offices to discuss the best procedure of publishing the letter and at the same time obtaining from it the maximum news and advertising benefit.

More than one letter of this kind, written under the mental stress of a man about to commit suicide, they reasoned, would hardly have been written. But what if others did exist? If the morning paper had a duplicate copy and published the letter Sunday night or early Monday, the news value to the *News*, an afternoon paper, would be greatly reduced. It was a gamble. The editors decided to act on the assumption that this was the only letter in existence. They deemed it wise to wait until Monday, then print their extras and rush them to the streets.

EVERY door to the *News* building was locked Monday morning. Only employees were permitted to enter and they were not allowed to leave the building afterwards. A report that the *News* had received the letter spread rapidly. Hundreds of persons, including numerous reporters from other papers, gathered outside. Suspense had reached a climax.

A huge facsimile of the letter was engraved for the front page. The composing-room force worked with snap in their every motion. Everything was prepared for the presses behind locked doors. Only a chosen few saw the copy, type or cut. Orders were issued that 60,000 extras be printed. Presses began to roar and pour out the extra with the story for which the metropolis waited. Fast trucks were loaded, all behind locked doors.

Finally, when every truck had been loaded, doors were flung open. The trucks sped in all directions. People nearly fought for the extras. At the same time, radio announcements from the broadcasting station of the *News* stimulated the sale of the extra.

The letter was published, and no other newspaper in the city had the story. The *News* had scored a complete scoop.

Why had the letter been given to the *News*?

Any other newspaper in the city would have done the same things the *News* did if it had received the letter. Why was this paper singled out by the sender of the letter? The editors of the *News* learned the answer some time later.

The doctor had addressed the letter to two of his close professional friends. They were familiar with the murder case from its inception. They had read the news stories and editorials from the various papers during the trial, when the doctor was accused of murder and when hundreds of persons believed he would be found guilty.

After the doctor's suicide and receipt of his letter, these friends conferred to decide which newspaper should be permitted first to print the doctor's letter. They reviewed the case and discussed the policies and attitudes of the various papers regarding it.

The *News* was chosen because through all phases of the trial its policy had been simply to report the evidence as it developed through testimony. The editors had jumped to no conclusion or expressed no opinion regarding the doctor's innocence or guilt. Its policy had been an ethical one throughout. Consequently it was selected as the paper most worthy to receive the physician's last words.

## FIND THE TRUTH, THEN PRINT IT

By MARVIN H. CREAGER

Managing Editor, The Milwaukee Journal

FOR some three decades now I have been hearing prophecies of disaster of varying degree if this or that news item was published. So far I have never seen disaster result from the accurate printing of a legitimate story and I am convinced that Ralph Stout was right, as usual, when he advised: 'Don't worry about the result of printing facts. Nobody knows what the result will be, but it is rarely bad.'

"We humans profess amusement at the ostrich which thinks himself hidden when his head is in the sand. Yet some of us naively believe we can abolish facts by simply not printing them. Maybe we can, temporarily.

But usually when that is done gossip goes about at such a furious rate that the principals heartily wish there had been a clear publication of the facts before wagging tongues made a mountain of a molehill.

"Newspaper and government officials have so long chanted blithely about prosperity's return that no one will believe them now when good times really do come back. Way back in McGuffey's Third Reader, Electric Series, we learned through the parable of the wolf and the shepherd that 'the truth itself is not believed from one who often hath deceived.' The President, Mr. Joslin and certain journalistic Pollyannas should review that lesson.

"All this is based, of course, on the publication of complete facts. Half facts or distorted presentation calculated to give a wrong impression may be as bad as suppression. It seems to me that in so critical a time as the present it is more than ever the duty of newspapers to find the full truth and to tell it regardless of argument that it might hurt business or impede government. The truth will do neither. And we are not going to get back to normalcy any the sooner by virtue of the A. N. P. A.'s solemn banning of the word 'depression' or by repeating daily that this whole thing is psychological."—From the *Bulletin of The American Society of Newspaper Editors*.

# Getting the Material

How a Writer in the Business Field  
♦♦ Should Conduct an Interview ♦♦

By ARTHUR H. LITTLE

Editor, System Magazine

**Y**OU have found a clue to a story. You have followed that clue back to its source, to a certain individual. You are confronting the man who has the story concealed within him. In a general way you know something of what that story is; some one, this man or someone else who knows the story, has generalized it, sketched it for you. And now this man opens his mind to you by saying: "Why, yes, I'll be glad to tell you about it. Suppose you ask me some questions."

How now are you to proceed?

Let us visualize the situation. This man knows certain things, certain facts, that you want to know. Besides, he knows many other things, many other facts, irrelevant to the story, and hence, for your purposes, useless to you. How are you to select the facts that you need; how are you to segregate them and pick them out from the mass of knowledge in this man's mind?

Can he help you? Yes, to an extent; but only to a limited extent. This man is a man of action, not a man of letters. He has done something, created something, discovered something, achieved something, accomplished something. Write about it? The thought never has entered his head. Anyway, writing is a job for a writer. And now you, a writer, come along with a project to "write up" what he has done. Very well. He surrenders the initiative to you; in this transaction the responsibility is yours.

"Suppose," he suggests, "you ask me some questions." How are you to proceed?

**P**ROCEED intelligently; proceed along the lines of some intelligent plan; proceed along a course that you map out ahead of you as you go. That course will lead straight through your story to a certain fixed objective; and that objective is something that your business man probably would call the "big idea."

Suppose your business man is a retailer in a city of 50,000 in a rich ag-

## Editor's Note

**I**N this second of a series of six articles, Mr. Little tells how to get material for a business story. His series will interest especially the professional writer who wishes to market manuscripts to business magazines, and the beginning writer who wants more and larger pay checks.

Mr. Little, now editor of System, wrote these articles while associate editor of Business magazine. In them he discusses the procedure and technic of getting and writing a story, and the principles of the science that underlies the art of writing.

ricultural country; suppose you know that he has devised and applied to his business a successful technic for winning rural business away from the mail-order houses. That much you know, and no more. What is to be your course?

What, in this instance, is the "big idea"? Getting rural business! Very well; every fact, every detail of technic, in that man's mind in any way related to that "big idea" of getting rural business is a fact that you want; and every other fact that is not in some way related to that "big idea" is something that you do not want.

You ask him: "Well, how did you go about this job of beating mail-order competition? What method did you use?"

"Oh," he's likely to say, "I've applied a half dozen methods—used 'em at the same time. Don't know that you can give any one of 'em credit for doing the job."

**T**HUS your business man has presented a situation in which the writer in the business field frequently finds himself—the situation in which he is confronted, not merely by one method or by one procedure of technic, sharply defined, but by a

veritable array of methods and procedures. The business man's bag of tricks bulges with ideas. But the writer always has his guide—the ultimate objective, the "big idea."

Remembering the objective, you say to this retailer: "Well, suppose you give me, first, a sort of synopsis of your whole program of going after country business. Then we can discuss in detail each of your methods."

He will enumerate schemes and stratagems of merchandising. He may mention a map, studded with dome-headed tacks that represent customers sold; a mailing list, classified and cross-classified for the greater efficacy of his direct-mail advertising; a special advertising campaign designed to explain to new rural customers just why they ought to pay the postage or freight on mail orders that they buy from him; a collection of mail catalogs that serves as his source of ideas in writing and designing advertising matter; a scheme for rapid delivery of merchandise by motor truck over a radius of 50 miles from the store.

"And that," he may say, "that's about all."

Thenceforth your way is easy. Spread out before you now is the whole picture; you can do with it as you will. You can study the proportions of its component parts and trace out the general plan of its composition. You can pick the picture up and, at close range, study its details, peer into its perspectives and probe its depths.

**Y**OU can ask, for instance, to be shown the map, that is populated with dome-headed tacks. You can inquire into how the tacks were located in the beginning and how the map is kept up to date. You can go to the bottom of that phase of your story, then hitch your chair a little closer and go into the matter of the mailing list, digging into its classifications and cross-classifications and the reasons therefor. You can spread out before you on the merchant's

(Continued on page 15)

# Shopping For a Country Weekly

By HERMAN ROE

Field Director, National Editorial Association

**F**OR the ambitious young journalist, the door of opportunity in the country weekly field is open.

I can not agree with the writer of the article entitled "This Country Weekly Myth" in the November issue of *THE QUILL*. He seems to have acquired the impression somewhere that the small country weekly is "the utopia of newspaperdom"—at least he intimates that such is the myth that prevails "in most daily newspaper offices and college classrooms."

Now if I remember my philosophy correctly (or was it in the course in religion that we found a reference to it?)—Utopia is a condition or place of ideal perfection.

If that is the mental picture anyone has formed of the country weekly field, he will find it incorrect. And I rather suspect that, by the same token, the daily field, the magazine field, the farm-paper field, and every other branch of journalism, falls short of those Utopian qualities needed for ideal perfection. The man or woman who expects to find Utopia on this side of the grave is not cut out for the job of directing the destinies of a country weekly.

But for those looking for an opportunity, I insist that the weekly field will provide it—in fact, it may literally be described as "white unto the harvest" for a crop of forward-looking young journalists who are not afraid of work, who are prepared to serve as well as to receive, who possess managerial ability and executive capacity as well as a facility for writing—and who are country-minded.

**A**SSUMING that a young newspaper man has received his coveted sheepskin following a four-year course in journalism, my advice would be that he acquire some practical experience in the office and plant of a successful weekly—one that is hitting on all cylinders and is directed (or driven) by an honest-to-goodness newspaper chauffeur—one who has earned the right to place an M.P. after his name, signifying that he is a Master Publisher.

Here is my definition of what constitutes a Master Publisher:

## Experience Plus

**N**EWSPAPER men interested in the country weekly field will find this article by Herman Roe, field director of the National Editorial Association and publisher of the Northfield, Minn., *News*, of unusual interest.

In addition to his own pertinent observations, Mr. Roe has presented the experiences of two young newspaper men who related to him in writing their manner of selecting a paper for purchase.

Mr. Roe was graduated from St. Olaf's College in 1908 after an active college career. He was principal of the high school at Anoka, Minn., for two years, going to the Northfield *News* in 1910 as city editor. Two months after becoming associated with the paper, he purchased it and has remained its publisher while playing an increasingly active and important part in the building of the National Editorial Association and other editorial and civic organizations.

A Master Publisher of a country weekly recognizes that his newspaper is his community's greatest public-utility institution; that he serves his paper best who serves his community best; who seeks first the favor of his constituency through service and then justly expects that all other needful things will be added unto him; who aims to gather all the news that is fit to print in every field of activity in the community, placing special emphasis on constructive farm news and school activities; who aims every week to cultivate every possible source of news and to produce a paper teeming with news stories that are prepared with care and packed with human interest; who is fair, tolerant, impartial; who produces a paper so attractive in typographical appearance that it is a credit to its community; who

renders genuine service to retail merchants as their advertising counsel and agent; who nurses an insatiable desire to see his subscription list grow; who maintains a cash-in-advance subscription policy; who appreciates his obligations to his brother publishers and maintains profitable rates, is ethical in his observance of all the rules and customs of the industry of which he is a part, and is a member of state and national press associations.

**F**OLLOWING a brief postgraduate course in a newspaper plant whose policies were guided by such a Master Publisher, the time should be ripe for the young newspaper man to strike out "on his own"—providing that he has been thrifty, has budgeted his finances and has demonstrated to himself and his banker that he can acquire the savings-account habit, and thereby has accumulated a small "nest egg" and a line of credit.

In surveying the field in shopping for a country weekly I can offer no better guideposts to follow than those cited by two young publishers who have "gone through the mill" in recent months. One is a graduate of the University of Minnesota who recently purchased a weekly in Iowa. In seeking a desirable newspaper property here are the factors that he considered and his comment:

"1. Location in a county seat. It seems to me that in view of the trend of the development of this country, by the time I have children ready to enter the field, there will be relatively few worth-while newspaper locations outside of county seats. At least this tendency of the county seats to absorb business from all surrounding territory seems to be very marked.

"2. I wanted, if possible, to get into a county seat having only one newspaper. From investigations I made there are very few towns having two weekly papers, both of which are making money.

"3. In the event that I could not find a one-paper county seat, I was interested in securing a location where the competition would be honest, and as friendly as possible under such conditions. In this respect I am

## Valuable Pointers on What to Consider When Purchasing a Newspaper Are Presented in this Authoritative Article

certain that I have made a happy choice—at least thus far.

"4. Interesting territory. During my investigations I toured Iowa, southwestern Minnesota and part of Wisconsin, but found no place that appealed to me as much as the county in which I finally located.

"5. A prosperous farming community. I realize that in 1931 such a thing is almost impossible, but I believe that with dairying as the major source of revenue of this county, we never will feel the wide variations in business that will be found where the territory depends upon one crop.

"6. A location in a town as far as possible from daily newspaper competition. In my case the trade territory for 30 miles in all directions, with the exception of the west, can be tied up to our city. How much will depend on how progressive our merchants will be in the years to come.

"7. A population as diversified as possible. I feel that any editor having to cater to one class or one nationality is at a distinct disadvantage.

"I suppose I ought to say a great deal about liking the town in which I live, but I think any normal, healthy individual running a creditable newspaper, regardless of where he locates, will find and make all of the friends for whom he has time. It seems to me that anyone with a good business and a few friends can be happy in the country field."

**A**NOTHER witness I wish to summon has had considerable newspaper experience on weeklies and dailies in country towns in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ohio. He devoted several weeks last winter to scouting for a country newspaper and during that period discussed his experiences with me on several occasions. I was impressed

with the thoroughness with which he went into the matter. He finally bought a weekly in a town with 1000 population. To my request that he outline the methods he used in shopping for a country weekly he submitted the following:

"In my opinion, there are only two states in the old Union—Minnesota and Wisconsin. So when I started out to shop I concentrated my attention on some place in these two states.

"Buying a good newspaper, I found, is much more of a job than I ever supposed. The good fields are already taken and the publishers are either making money or a satisfactory living, so the list of good newspapers is not large. Newspapers in the West—meaning Wisconsin and Minnesota—are not commanding the prices one must pay in the East and Middle West. In Ohio and Pennsylvania publishers think nothing of asking \$50,000 for their newspapers. The trend of high prices is extending westward. In the East the volumes are usually higher and their wage scales are too, due in part to the number of union shops.

"Personally, I think the opportunities for young men and women in the community newspaper field were never as great as now. In the daily field, ownership is almost out of the question for young people. Few worth-while dailies can be bought for

less than \$50,000 and usually one must pay from \$50,000 up into the millions for a daily paper.

"The weekly field is the one unworked end of newspaperdom where a young man or woman can get in on the ground floor without a very great investment and build up a worthwhile property. I believe this day belongs to the merchandiser, for business is on wheels and it comes to the merchant who makes an effort to get it. The young man or woman who enters the newspaper field with a sincere effort to help a merchant increase his business and who will put out a good newspaper with news and circulation to back the advertising up, will not have much difficulty building a profitable business and a real property.

**I**N sizing up a newspaper I first try to study the community itself. The bank directory tells me of the resources and deposits of the banks, which is important. Dun and Bradstreet's tell me what I should know about the condition of the merchants and industries and give me a line about the nationality, etc. Then a walk around the town gives me some material I should have. I can see by the appearance of the streets, the churches and homes how much civic spirit there is in the town. More im-

portant than all of this is the appearance of the stores themselves. A store with good fronts, live merchandise displays and a neat appearance is likely to be interested in advertising to increase the business. Even more important, to me, are the merchandise stocks. If the stocks are depleted or incomplete—if the merchandise is shoddy—or if the prices are out of line and the service rather poor it is pretty hard to do a

### Facts About the Weekly Field

**C**OMMENTING on the weekly field as an opportunity for young newspaper men, Mr. Roe observes:

"There are 2,947 county seats in the United States. Eliminate the county seats that are metropolitan centers and good-sized cities served by dailies and you would have some 2,000 county seats in the weekly classification.

\* \* \*

"County-seat weeklies are the cream of the field. To purchase one requires some capital. The capital required to purchase one of these county-seat weeklies will vary from \$15,000 to \$100,000.

\* \* \*

"Eliminating county-seat newspapers, we have approximately 9,000 weeklies where opportunity knocks at the gate for a host of ambitious young journalists, long on brains but short on capital.

\* \* \*

"To show what can be accomplished on the economic side—to say nothing of the achievement and service and leadership angle—I could cite a Master Publisher who, in a village of 1,200, does an annual business of \$35,000.

\* \* \*

"There are thousands of villages in the one- to three-thousand population group that afford opportunities to the resourceful young journalist who is not afraid of work."

(Continued on page 16)

# THE QUILL

A Magazine for Writers, Editors and Publishers

THE QUILL is published monthly. It is devoted exclusively to the interests of journalists. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted provided credit is given to "The Quill of Sigma Delta Chi." Subscription rates to members and non-members: \$2.00 per year; \$7.50 for five years. Single copies, 25 cents.

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FEBRUARY, 1932

## Kentucky for Progress?

CONSIDERABLE attention was drawn to the State of Kentucky when the slogan "Kentucky For Progress" was placed on the state's automobile license plates. The slogan was a good one and the motives that prompted its being placed on the tags no doubt were equally as good.

Judging from recent developments in the "Blue Grass State" there is plenty of room to apply "progress" to the Kentucky bench.

A Circuit Court judge arbitrarily announced that no reporter from the Knoxville, Tenn., *News-Sentinel* would be permitted in the courtroom unless that newspaper apologized for the stories written by one of its representatives concerning the trial of a union leader before the court and for an editorial commenting on the trial. He also demanded "corrections."

His action aroused a storm of protest. The case was appealed by the Scripps-Howard Newspapers with a legal force headed by Newton D. Baker. In voicing his appeal to the appellate court, Mr. Baker said in part:

"The great safeguard of the civil liberties of this nation lies in an alert, zealous and vigorous press. A court ought not be allowed to exercise its personal spleen. If a court can do what Judge Prewitt has done, then it is within its power to conduct star-chamber proceedings from which the observant eye of public opinion has been withdrawn. It is conceivable that during tempestuous times we would be without the great corrective of public opinion."

This is not the first time that the freedom of the press has been impaired in Kentucky. It probably will not be the last. Newspaper men sent to investigate conditions in the coal fields or to cover the trials of mine workers and union representatives on various charges have been threatened, beaten and forcibly ejected from communities. Advertising boycotts have been threatened. Miners are forbidden to read certain newspapers. Newsboys in company-owned towns are not permitted to handle certain papers. A committee of nationally known individuals visited the coal fields. It had scarcely left

when charges were brought against some of the committee members.

All this in America—not in Russia or some other country where censorship, intimidation and suppression have become notorious.

Nor is Kentucky alone in such conditions. The terrorism of private police and company operatives in other states, such as Pennsylvania, has interfered with the press in its effort to portray conditions as they exist.

Newspapers and newspaper men must battle constantly to obtain the news and then present it. And from present indications the battle will become more severe as time passes. One of the best weapons the press has in such situations as the one cited in Kentucky is widespread publicity. Let the public everywhere know of the difficulties, the barriers, that must be faced and overcome at times to get and present the news. It was gratifying and encouraging to note the number of newspapers that carried full accounts of the recent Kentucky fight. May more of them fall into line in the future.

A battle for the freedom of the press in one locality, city or state is not a battle for that area alone. It is a battle in which newspaper men, newspapers and journalistic organizations everywhere should participate to the best of their ability.

## "Smart" Newspaper Work

SOME newspaper men will do anything for a story. They will flash reporters' badges and mumble something about "headquarters" to intimidate some one into talking to them. They will represent themselves as being from the prosecutor's office. They may even "kidnap" a witness under the guise that they are officers or investigators.

Such tactics do yield stories. But they do newspapers and newspaper men as a whole more harm than good.

Here is an example. A couple of social prominence was being married. There were four newspapers, one a tabloid, in the city where the ceremony was being held. All wanted photographs. The tabloid sent five photographers to the house where the ceremony was to be performed. One cameraman was represented as being from the tabloid, one as being from a New York paper and each of the others as being from one of the three other papers in the city.

The photographers explained that by posing then and there the whole matter of picture taking would be concluded since the representatives of "all" papers were there. The bride and groom agreed. They posed as the cameramen directed. The "snappers" gathered up their cameras and left.

A short time later, the photographers and reporters from the other papers arrived at the scene. They did not meet with a very cordial reception. It was with difficulty that they finally persuaded the principals of the wedding that they had been imposed upon. The bride and groom consented to pose again with considerable reluctance. They were exceedingly angry at the manner in which they had been treated. So were their friends and guests.

Perhaps that was a "smart" trick. Perhaps it would be considered enterprise by some of those at editorial helms. Perhaps that was what some editors mean when they talk about "using your heads."

Call it what you will but that sort of newspaper work can bring nothing but distrust, disrespect and dislike for newspapers and newspaper men. Every story or picture gained in such a manner does immeasurable harm.

## AFTER DEADLINE

By R. L. P.

ANYONE interested in the country weekly field should find Herman Roe's article on "Shopping for a Country Weekly" full of valuable suggestions. Mr. Roe has done a splendid job of publishing his own paper and his contributions to the advancement of the interests of small-town and city publishers as a whole are well known and recognized.

I had not realized, before reading his article, that the county-seat country weekly or semi-weekly field was so limited in numbers. As he points out, however, there are some 10,000 weeklies in non-county-seat towns that offer real opportunities to ambitious young men. And it doesn't cost a fortune to acquire control of them.

George H. Adams' remarks about wages and salaries merit serious consideration by newspaper men and publishers alike. If newspaper salaries were to be judged entirely on the demand for and supply of would-be newspaper workers, the wage level would be still lower than the existing one. College and university men have been offering to work for nothing or next to nothing in many instances for the sake of gaining experience. It places publishers, experienced newspaper men and applicants in a difficult situation when they all know that two eager, alert youngsters can be put to work for the salary being paid the experienced man—even though that salary be small.

It behooves a newspaper man to become especially adept in some phase of newspaper work or to become an authority on some subject, such as agriculture, economics, taxation or finance, for examples, if he is to lift himself from the ranks. To simply fill a job or cover a beat is not enough in these times. Competition and pressure are keen and will become increasingly so.

MANY unemployed newspaper men and journalism graduates unable to get themselves placed under current conditions have turned to free-lance writing as a means of gaining experience, reputation and keeping the wolf from getting too bold. Some of them are doing quite well too. Perhaps the articles by Arthur H. Little, on writing for business magazines, will aid these and other free-

lance workers to garner in an extra check or two.

Lewis S. Larkin ran up against what a lot of other university-trained newsmen have bucked. He could print the news about the ordinary residents of his community but if there was any possibility that a figure in the community might be angered by an item—that item was "out."

Why should a publisher pass over some item unless its printing actually would injure someone? Newspapers, many of them, take far more liberty with unimportant individuals who can not strike back than they do with citizens who have the courage and means to retain lawyers as their spokesmen.

The encouraging thing about Larkin's experiences is that he has not become cynical as yet. He still has faith in his profession. It is men who can keep that faith, despite obstacles, ridicule and lack of interest on the part of many of their fellows, who will keep journalism on the plane it should be.

EVERY now and then a newspaper which attempts to conduct its operations along the grounds of decency and fair play is given a forceful demonstration that the policy has not gone unnoticed. Such an example is that which H. Donald Crawford treats of in his article "Decency Pays Dividends." If every other argument for decency in the news columns fails, there still remains the plea that "it's good business."

NOT enough newspaper men are interested in their profession as a whole. Too few of them read the weekly and monthly magazines devoted to publishing, editing and writing. Too few of them know or seem to care what is happening along journalistic lines outside their own respective cities.

The same thing could be said of any other profession. There are physicians who pay little heed to the activities of medical organizations, to research or to medical journals. So with lawyers, engineers and others.

If I am not mistaken, however, the tendency in the newspaper profession is toward the right direction. More and more newspaper men are attending state and national meetings of journalistic groups. The circulation

of magazines devoted to things journalistic is mounting. Articles, developments in the field and policies are furnishing meat for discussion and argument. Newsmen are becoming conscious that association and organization are highly worth while.

Journalism needs strong, intelligent and courageous groups which can be marshalled into a united front when the need arises.

It has a number of organizations today which are striving in the right direction. Their influence mounts and will continue to mount with the right sort of leadership.

Officers and members of such groups as the American Society of Newspaper Editors; the National Editorial Association; Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalistic fraternity; the Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism; the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, and various state press associations are having more and more contact and association with each other these days. From these contacts, strong friendships have been formed. The ability of the profession to present a united front in matters such as suppression or censorship increases steadily as the officers and members of these and other groups strive toward the common goal of a better journalism.

OCCASIONALLY I come across an article that I like to suggest to readers of THE QUILL for their own consumption. I want to suggest this month that you try to locate a copy of the January issue of the *Country Gentleman* and read Ben Hibbs' article-interview "Oklahoma's Plain Old Man."

If you read it, I feel sure that you will have a real picture of "Alfalfa Bill" when you are through. It is one of the most interesting interviews, one of the best handled, that I have come across in some time.

Mr. Hibbs, associate editor of the *Country Gentleman*, was a newspaper man before taking up magazine work. Readers of THE QUILL will remember his "Know Your Ducks," an article on writing for the magazines, which appeared in THE QUILL last July.

His article about Oklahoma's headline-getting executive is an object lesson in the art of presenting interviews.

## THE BOOK BEAT

Conducted by MITCHELL V. CHARNLEY

### War, Opera Bouffe

**THE MARTIAL SPIRIT**, by Walter Millis. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1931. \$4.00.

If you want to know just how comic-operatic the Spanish-American War really was, get hold of a copy of "The Martial Spirit." If you particularly want to know how clownish a part an irresponsible press played in it, be sure and get hold of it. Mr. Millis, paradoxically, in presenting the war as a farce, has managed to make it important.

The author admits that he has stressed the satiric aspects of the war. His defense is that he believes that every war in modern times has presented "precisely the same elements, though ordinarily they are concealed beneath the immense tragedy which war normally involves." But this war "offered an opportunity to examine them in one case where the tragedy was not present."

He is, of course, speaking in relative terms. It was tragic that there was a war at all, considering that it could have been averted but for the yellow press and McKinley's weakness. It was tragic that some thousands of enthusiastically patriotic Americans, bewildered Spaniards, and freedom-loving Filipinos had to die; that decrepit old Spain, which did everything but sit up and beg to avoid war, had to lose her colonies; that the Philippines did not gain their independence. It is tragic today that we are paying out good money for it.

But newspaper men will be most interested in learning what the press had to do with the mess. Says the book:

"It is generally conceded that a large part of the American newspaper ferocity toward Spain was due to the accidental circumstance that Mr. Hearst and Mr. Pulitzer were at the time locked in the famous struggle for supremacy in the field of sensational journalism in New York. Whenever one side sprang a sensation the other [sprang] a better one. . . . It served almost as well to demonstrate that the opponent's sensation had been a 'fake.'"

Elsewhere the book quotes Mr. Pulitzer as confessing that "he had rather liked the idea of a war—not a

big one—but one that would arouse interest and give him a chance to gauge the reflex in his circulation figures." And it points out that Mr. Hearst's paper, the *New York Journal*, blamed Spain for the destruction of the *Maine* almost as soon as the disaster became known—and then offered a \$50,000 reward for evidence while the paper's circulation passed the million mark!

Briefly, it makes it pretty clear that the rival sheets heroized the Cubans, villainized the Spaniards, and generally exploited the situation until the American public was ready to whip Spain with bare hands—which it almost had to do, at that.

There were editors, of course, who kept their heads, tried to get the facts, and kept steadily before them their responsibility as journalists. But their papers, unfortunately, didn't achieve circulations of 5,000,000 a week, as the *World* did. They didn't print the stuff the public wanted to read.

The book will give you a deeper appreciation of the power, for good or evil, of the printed word; better appreciation, too, of the price of being an honest and capable journalist of the E. L. Godkin type. Possibly you'll be more willing, in consequence, to pay that price.

Swift-moving, sardonic, entertaining, stimulating—that's Mr. Millis' book. It's well worth a reading, whether or not you agree that all war is ludicrous.—Martin A. Klaver.

• • •

### Not "Just Another Life"

**MR. MILLER OF "THE TIMES,"** by F. Fraser Bond. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1931. \$3.00.

This is an interesting life story, humanly if not brilliantly written, about a great editor, a powerful newspaper and a dramatic period of political struggle.

The story of Charles Randolph Miller and his rise from New Hampshire farm boy to the editorship of the *New York Times* reads like a success novel. Because of the anonymity of his guild, the man, while living, was practically unknown to the thousands who read his paper. Yet during his 46 years as editor, he did as much,

perhaps, to mold public opinion, to influence the growing independence of the press and to create a demand for better journalism as did any other one man.

As often happens, Miller, the boy, gave promise of being anything but an accomplished student and inspiring writer. F. Fraser Bond shows him to us as a "problem" youngster in school, expelled from Kimball Institute and later from Dartmouth because of his annoying disregard for grades and his aversion to systematic study. But at Dartmouth he picked up two things—a definite literary trend and a most amazingly complete vocabulary.

With these assets as cudgels and a pleasant personality as an entering wedge, we see young Miller serving his apprenticeship on the *Springfield Republican*. From there we follow him direct to the *New York Times*, where, at 34, he had risen to the editorship.

The lean years which followed showed that good editors don't always make good business men. We breathe easier when Adolph S. Ochs, brainy young Southerner, buys the paper and Mr. Miller is limited to his proper place, the editor's chair, much relieved to be out of the trials of making ends meet.

Clear thinking, utter honesty and a kindly understanding of men and nations characterized Mr. Miller's writings during the recent international tussle. His own sanity counteracted a lot of mad thinking throughout the country.

Luckily Mr. Bond saw the importance of letting a man's words speak for him. The result—an appendix containing the best of the Miller editorials, and memoranda of the hitherto unpublished conferences between Mr. Miller and President Wilson. Don't leave it out because it's in fine type. It gives a better picture of the man and his thinking than will any mere tale of dates and deeds.—Jean Guthrie.

### Question and Answer

Why is a newspaper like a woman?

Jess Mitchell, editor of the *Muleshoe Journal*, offered a year's subscription to his paper for the best answer to this question. Miss Alda Scott, Baileyboro, won the prize with the following:

"Because every man should have one of his own and not run after his neighbor's."—*The Ohio Newspaper*.

# FOUR YEARS OF THEORY, SIX MONTHS OF REALITY

- Ideals and Actualities Sometimes Clash, •
- This Young Newspaperman Learned •

By LEWIS S. LARKIN

**O**N a balmy spring day, imbued with the principles of my profession-to-be, I listened to Dean Walter Williams, now president of the University of Missouri, repeat in unfaltering tones his "Journalist's Creed."

"I believe in the profession of journalism—accuracy and fairness—a single standard of helpful truth—cleanliness—supreme test is its measure of public service—" these and other idealistic gems of the creed fell upon my ears.

Six months after securing my first job, I turned to the creed again, read and reread it, and pondered.

**W**HAT I have to say concerns not the shortcomings of my profession. The flaws are held up in sufficient limelight already. Neither do I hope to offer a panacea for the ills of the profession or any guiding platitudes for future journalists.

I only wish to record my own experiences and feelings as closely as possible, hoping thereby that the oncoming tide of graduating journalists may avoid the quicksands of cynicism that almost engulfed me.

By way of introduction, I will say that I was graduated in June, 1929. Then followed a 17-month vagabondia around the world. Returning to the United States in October, 1930, at the middle of the present economic state, I found it difficult to get a job.

Last spring I landed a job as city editor of a small-town daily in a middle western town. Although I was titled "city editor" I gathered 75 per cent of the news and supervised the additional. So really I was only a glorified reporter—if the word "glorified" may be used.

Ready for my debut as a newspaper man, I entered the work with the zest that only an embryo journalist can. I was supercharged with the ideals of the Journalist's Creed, ready to put the paper first and per-

sonal ambition second. A sincere desire to serve the community through the medium of the printed word, to give the paper the best I had and improve it in any way advisable, permeated my entire system.

**A**FTER all, I was possessed with that childlike innocence and naivete that every young man and woman has upon entering the world of business. Soon I was to encounter a series of experiences and incidents, relatively unimportant in themselves, that proved to be a testing ground for the Journalist's Creed.

There has been considerable discussion in the columns of *THE QUILL* concerning the suppression of certain types of news stories. It is my belief that suppression is justified only if it benefits society, or, an individual for the betterment of his well-being.

It so happened one day in the town that a man, far too old to be driving a motor car, figured in a collision. He

was one of the pioneers of the town, beloved by the people and a consistent advertiser in the paper. He was wholly to blame for the accident, admitted it, and was willing to pay the costs.

I wrote the story and put it on the hook. The publisher promptly relegated it to the wastebasket with the words: "It would only antagonize the old man."

The engulfment by the wastebasket didn't bother me but the sugared explanation was not a defense for suppression. The next day, about six people, in slightly derisive tones, inquired why we hadn't printed so-and-so's accident story. We printed accounts of other accidents, so it was naturally presumed that we should have reported this one.

**T**HE town, just as its larger counterparts, indulges in sporadic attempts to curb speeding. It so happened in one of the anti-speeding campaigns that a prominent minister of the town was caught in the net. The charge was 45 miles an hour on a main street. The police allowed the charge to stick and the pulpiteer was fined \$1 and costs.

"But you mustn't print that," the publisher warned me as I came back from police court. I did not remonstrate—largely because jobs are scarce.

However, what I felt he meant to say was this: "It is all right to print about John Doe, ditch digger, being arrested for speeding but this minister addresses a large congregation which might not want it known that their preacher was charged with speeding." In other words—keep up the subscription list at any cost!

**T**HE vigorous activities of the town's police are limited to arresting preachers for speeding, directing traffic Saturday night and getting an inebriated community leader on the right street headed for home. They also perform other labors coincident with a star and uniform.

Gathering tribute is one of those menial labors. The town cannot afford to pay the officers much in the way of salaries so tribute is a pardon-

## Keep Faith

**A**PPLYING the principles of the Journalist's Creed is not always possible, Lewis S. Larkin found, when one's employer has different ideas.

He relates his findings along that line in the accompanying article, an article in which many newspaper men will find their own experiences duplicated.

Mr. Larkin, far from being soured by his experiences, still carries on with the determination that some day he will be able to put into working use the ideals he still cherishes, battered somewhat though they may be by contact with actuality.

Courage, not criticism, is the tone of his article.

able sideline. "Hot" goods from robberies also help buy tobacco.

After one grocery store had been burglarized twice in the same week, another three times in one month and a series of ten other robberies had occurred in 30 days, I wrote a mild article supposed to have been the opinions of a number of leading citizens in which the police force was chided gently for its inability to stop the baby crime wave.

But that, as the others, was not printed. It seemed that the chief and some of the other officers were subscribers to the paper. Moreover, they never allowed the newspaper office to be burglarized and kept an official eye on it at night. Their opinion carried weight with the town's bad boys and they were adept at subtle remarks about the paper's efficiency—or inefficiency, as the case might have been.

While I don't believe in the crusading spirit of the eighties it seemed that the situation called for some sort of action.

**W**HILE this might be a small town compared to many, its police officials are up-to-date in some respects. After walking a beat all day (by playing penny ante), it is of course necessary that they save their feet and not walk too far for their drinks—hence a speakeasy across from the city hall. While we all are entitled to our personal opinions on the Eighteenth Amendment, it is my belief that high-school students should not be allowed to frequent the place, not because of the possible effects of the liquor upon them, but their reactions in seeing the leading business men of the town at the same place!

Unfortunately, one of the speakeasy proprietors is a city councilman, another a groceryman who advertises largely in our newspaper, and the third the son of the police chief . . . . ad infinitum. Of course I might have gotten the idea over better had I informed my employer that his son owed me \$2 which he had borrowed at the Scarlet Dragon a week ago—but—and as I said before . . . . jobs are scarce now!

During some recent inquiries by the legislature one of the "home town boys who had made good" was brought into the limelight by unsavory but lucrative practices during his sojourn at the capital. While the nearby metropolitan newspapers printed the stories in full, we didn't dare cast aspersions on the integrity of our own political proteges. Many of the readers asked why the stories

had not been printed, to which I offered the usual blank stare and passed the buck.

**T**HESE are a few of the detailed incidents I have experienced in six months as an embryo journalist. To record tersely (terseness being another of those principles of the Journalist's Creed) I might state the following:

We never mention the make of the motor car in an accident. Hence, in case a man has two cars the reader can guess which one it is . . . this adds to the appeal of the story.

If a member of a firm that doesn't advertise with us is honored in some way he gets three lines although the story warrants half a column.

Although the city council, composed of mechanics and grocery-store salesmen, with a couple of bootleggers thrown in for a sobering effect, makes a bad mistake on awarding a contract which causes a loss of thousands of dollars to the taxpayers, nothing is mentioned.

When a milk ordinance is passed prohibiting the sale of grade C and D milk, the producers of the said product subscribe a fund and the law is never enforced, neither is the story published.

Of course, these are nothing compared to some of the experiences of reporters and city editors on larger papers. Many newspaper men, on reading this probably will agree that there is plenty more of the same coming to me.

**M**Y employer best illustrated his policy one day when he calmly stated, "We're in the business to make money."

That statement covered every sin of commission and omission and most of those in between. The newspaper game to him was simply a money-making proposition. Be it said in his

defense that he wasn't a newspaper man. He had no chance to absorb the principles of the Journalist's Creed. He had not been raised or instructed in that field of service and business. He had jumped from business to the newspaper game.

The reader might argue that all newspaper publishers and proprietors are not from other fields. True, but few newspaper publishers come anywhere near the precepts of the Journalist's Creed, I fear.

It seems that publishers who are in the game from a standpoint of service first are distinctly in the minority. Of course they're willing to serve the community if it does not conflict with their own desires and plans. Fellow graduates have written to me of their experiences tending to bear me out in this respect. In all divisions, whether chain newspapers, private enterprise or news-gathering associations, fellow alumni have expressed to me some of the disappointments that I've gone through in six short months. Some have survived, as I have, while others have drifted with smirking cynicism and withered ideals into other fields of endeavor.

I believe that the business depression, which has been nothing more than an ultra-strong searchlight turned upon the frailties of mankind, will produce a unique and original psychological effect upon the present crop of young newspaper men. Only the strongest will survive and they will make future journalism better than the existing mode.

I have not regretted going into newspaper work, strange as it may seem from this present dissertation. I have no intention of turning back. I still believe it possible to have ideals and remain in newspaper work.

I hear again the first sentence of the Journalist's Creed: "I believe in the profession of journalism."

And I still do!

## KEEP THE PEOPLE INFORMED

By JAMES A. STUART, Managing Editor, The Indianapolis Star

**W**HETHER it is in dealing with government processes, foreign relations, economic interests, social trends or other problems that affect the people as a whole, the press has a twofold responsibility. One is to present the news of the day accurately, comprehensively, interestingly and without prejudice. The other is to give leadership and support to this twofold responsibility to justify welfare and progress. It must live up to this twofold responsibility to justify the freedom it has.

"The real responsibility, then, rests upon the editor to be well-informed and

to use sound and intelligent judgment. That type of editor will not suppress news his readers should have for the formation of constructive public opinion, nor will he publish incomplete or inaccurate information which might prove harmful.

"By the same rule of open and fair dealing, the government should not seek to suppress any news of its activities that the people have a right to know at the proper time. The wise public official will always take the press into his confidence."—From the *Bulletin* of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

## WAGES OR SALARIES?

(Continued from page 4)

University of Minnesota pointed out that there are some twenty universities operating what I believe are called 'A' schools of journalism, and he said offhand that the University of Minnesota would contribute one thousand dollars to the expense of that survey, and intimated that probably from the universities at least twenty thousand dollars could be expected. His figure was offhand, and, as he said, simply a statement to indicate that he was sincere in approving such a survey.

"I have written to a number of members of this Society and have been surprised to find a rather unanimous approval of this idea.

"Such an investigation could not be made hurriedly. The Society should take necessary action to launch it at this year's meeting.

"I move that the President be instructed to appoint a committee to commence such a survey as has been outlined in the foregoing statement."

That motion met with the support of such men as Mr. Owens of the

Baltimore Sun, Mr. Abbott of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Mr. Creager of the *Milwaukee Journal*, Mr. Allen of the *Wichita Beacon*.

During the resulting discussion, the president of the society stated that such a survey as I had suggested had already been agreed to by himself and by representatives of the various journalistic organizations.

Mr. Yost, of the resolutions committee, explained that his committee had a resolution which covered the matter and would report it shortly. However, when presented, it referred only to an investigation of "the whole field of education for journalism."

The resolution offered by the committee was then amended to commit the society to "the initiation of a comprehensive study, by its representatives, together with the representatives of journalism and other newspaper organizations," and directed that "the effort to obtain a comprehensive survey of the whole field of education for and the practices and opportunities of journalism"

be continued. In that form it was adopted.

Committees from the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism, the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, American Society of Newspaper Editors and the National Editorial Association are to meet to discuss such a survey.

Any argument that present business conditions make it inadvisable to bring up the matter of salaries now may be ignored because any survey which will be of real value would take at least two or three years to make.

A survey of the teaching of journalism would be worth while, but even more important, to my mind, would be a survey which would permit the universities now trying to train men for newspaper work to know what manner of life lies ahead of their graduates and from which newspaper publishers may learn whether they are getting the men they need to strengthen their properties, and, if not, why not.

## GETTING THE MATERIAL

(Continued from page 7)

desk that special advertising campaign and search out its appeal. You can browse through the mail-order catalogs and trace out the ideas the merchant has borrowed for his own uses. You can ask him to tell you, in detail, just how he directs his motor trucks in that scheme of quick delivery over a fifty-mile radius.

All the time, of course, you have been making notes, sketching for the guidance of your memory the facts and figures you have been collecting. Some of the matter you have taken down verbatim—such matter, for instance, as significant quotations from the advertising material. Here and there in the course of his conversation your merchant friend has dropped in some anecdote or instance. He has interrupted himself occasionally to say: "A funny thing happened in connection with that," and then he has told you some little story. Catch those little stories. A word or two for each one will store them away in your notebook. Later, when you are writing your story, you will find them surprisingly useful.

Before you end the interview with your merchant search about in your

mind for ends of thought left loose, for details of the picture left hazy and indistinct, for questions here and there left unanswered. Tidy up your handiwork; tie in the loose ends of thought; point up the hazy details; get answers to the unanswered questions. And having done that, you are ready to close your notebook, thank your merchant friend and put on your hat. You have met the story and it is yours.

**O**BVIOUSLY, not every story will be one that describes how a retailer, doing business in a city of 50,000, won business from the mail-order houses. Obviously, too, not every story comes from one individual; to gather these facts a writer may have to interview two or three or a half dozen men in the same business enterprise, the same line of business, the same business organization, the same research bureau.

But whatever the conditions and circumstances, whether you are getting a story about retailing or manufacturing, whether you interview one man or a half dozen, you will be wise

to follow, in your own technic, some such procedure as this:

1. Think straight!
2. First visualize the whole story and determine for yourself the main objective, the purpose, the "big idea."
3. All the time you are gathering your facts, keep in mind that "big idea"; relate every fact, every component part of your material, to that "big idea."
4. Be vigilant for "little things," for anecdotes and specific instances; capture every one that flutters into sight.
5. Take nothing for granted. Don't leave obvious questions unanswered, trusting to answer them out of your own logic or your own imagination. You may guess wrong.
6. Make plenty of notes.
7. Until you finish, think straight!

Coming in *The Quill* in March—"The Structure of a Business Story," the third article in Mr. Little's series. The articles are appearing by permission of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, former publishers of *Business* magazine, which Mr. Little at one time edited.

## Really, Now

IF you have been enjoying the lively articles in *The Quill* each month through the kindness of a friend—

IF you have been borrowing his copy of the magazine, either with or without his permission—

IF you have had the temerity to do that unpardonable of unpardonables, to read his copy over his shoulder—

IF you have been able to get *The Quill* only occasionally because some one else beat you to that friend's copy—

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## Shopping For a Country Weekly

(Continued from page 9)

good merchandising job and that means it will be difficult to get results for the merchant. Advertising must pay the advertiser.

"After a preliminary survey of the town, I go to the newspaper office to talk with the publisher. Where the office keeps books—and many of them keep just check stubs and an advertising ledger—I get the gross business and then try to break it down according to advertising, printing and circulation receipts. Next I try to get the figures for the past five years and then study the growth or decline of each department. Then I learn the rates charged for advertising (by studying the charges), how the prices were computed for printing and what the rate for subscriptions is. I was interested to learn how much advertising was traded out and how much effort was put forth to sell the advertising, printing and circulation. This gave me some idea whether I could hope to hold the business and possibly increase it. I studied the circulation list to learn how much was in arrears and what effort had been made in a circulation way.

"Next I talked with the banker and the business men. My experience is that they are overenthusiastic and given to overstatement so I carefully put negative questions to them and pinned them down to facts. I was especially anxious to learn how much business each place was doing for that gave me some idea of the potential advertising revenue I could get. This I would get by suggesting to the merchant who I guessed was doing a volume of \$75,000 a year that he must be doing a \$50,000 business. Usually he came back by telling me that he did \$75,000, or some such figure. In this way I had a pretty good idea of my potential.

NEXT I tried to find out where his business came from and how far he drew business to the town. This gave me some idea of my natural trade area and the territory in which I could expect to develop circulation. I also studied the merchants. Aggressive merchants who wanted to extend and expand their business appealed to me because it is possible to do a job for them. So many merchants want to sleep under the counter and no newspaper can make merchants out of them.

"The spirit of the town counts for a great deal. A community in which the residents take pride in their homes and their town can be taken far. If the civic and commercial spirit is dead, a newspaper has a hard battle ahead. A city torn by feuds and split into factions is a hazardous place for a newspaper investment because it is so difficult for a newspaper to remain aloof.

"Of course I try to analyze a newspaper's expenses as well as income and it would be well if a man could hire an accountant to give him a true picture of the proposition. In the small weeklies this is rather expensive and most of us feel that we cannot afford the expense.

"Next in my investigation I study the condition of the plant and I do not feel capable of doing this so I usually got some friend on the mechanical side to go over this for me. In my calculations I always estimate how much I will have to spend to put it in good mechanical condition and this enters into my decision as to the value of the plant.

IN figuring the price, I start on the premise that the newspaper plant and business is worth the average gross business for the past five years. Then I add and subtract from that. If the field is promising and the business effort expended in the past rather weak I add something to the starting price. If the paper has the good will of the community that is worth something too. If the advertising rate is low and the printing prices much below the Franklin Catalog scale, I subtract. If the volume is the result of high pressure and unlikely to be maintained, I subtract. If the town is hemmed in by others much larger, I subtract. On the other hand, a business which is built on a sound basis, with the advertising and printing rates reasonable and the pay roll not out of control, with good equipment, and if a good chance to build on this sound foundation is evident, I feel the business is worth paying a little premium to get.

"Most young people, I find, in buying a newspaper do not make allowance for a sufficient working capital. They expect the banks to carry them and few banks today are making capital loans. In my particular case, I started with sufficient reserve so that I have been able to buy equipment at

low prices and at the same time retain the respect of the bankers by not asking them to loan me money. I felt that if I carried a respectable balance with the bank and paid my bills on the tenth of each month I could win the respect of the trade and the business houses.

"I have not touched on competitive situations because I was not interested in a two-newspaper town unless a merger could be effected. Personally I am inclined to the view that there will be fewer of them as time goes on."

**T**HESE two witnesses have covered the case so thoroughly that nothing more need be said on the subject of what factors to keep in mind in shopping for a country weekly.

In their testimony they also have made reference to the situation in the country field at present regarding opportunities—or lack of them—to find desirable weekly-newspaper properties that are for sale.

The university graduate's objective was a county-seat paper. There are 2,947 county seats in the United States. Eliminate the county seats that are metropolitan centers and good-sized cities served by dailies and you would have some 2,000 county seats in the weekly classification. County-seat weeklies are the cream of the field. To purchase one requires some capital. They will do an annual gross volume of business considerably higher than the average of \$19,000 for weeklies as indicated in the Moore-Roe National Surveys of the Weekly Newspaper Industry compiled by the National Editorial Association's Research Bureau. The capital required to purchase one of these county-seat weeklies will vary from \$15,000 to \$100,000.

Eliminating county-seat newspapers, we have approximately 9,000 weeklies where opportunity knocks at the gate for a host of ambitious young journalists, long on brains but short on capital. Many are published in small villages and are manned by publishers who do not have the vision or the capacity or the ambition to cash in on the possibilities for service or profit.

**T**O show what can be accomplished on the economic side—to say nothing of the achievement and service and leadership angle—I could cite a Master Publisher who in a village of 1,200 does an annual business of \$35,000, twice the national average for

weeklies. There are thousands of villages in the one- to three-thousand population group that afford opportunities to the resourceful young journalist who is not afraid of work. In fact, if he has been inoculated with the newspaper germ, all the trials and tribulations he will meet with in the small-town weekly field will sink into insignificance when balanced against the pleasure and the satisfaction that will be his. The daily grind of the newspaper game will not be work to him, but play.

In the weekly, as well as every field of journalism, the type of young man or woman who will succeed is the one who, as "Ding," the cartoonist, expressed it, "has high-test gasoline in his tank, whom a bit of exciting news sets on fire." If you lack enthusiasm, if after a year you find the romance gone, your intellectual curiosity subsiding, then get out of the profession.

Exactness, enthusiasm, mental curiosity, personality, and initiative are the qualities that spell success in journalism. Given these qualities, in limited or in generous quantity, the young journalist who elects to enter the country weekly field will become an integral part and an important factor in his community's development. There is no shade or condition of life he will not see and come in intimate contact with. Adventure will come in all its manifold forms and he will see more real life in a decade of newspaper work than comes to almost any other man in a lifetime. He may not grow rich in money but he will become rich in experience and will have done a work that is satisfying and makes for wisdom and breadth of view such as no other job under the sun can give him. There are but two other professions—the ministry and medicine—that can equal journalism for opportunities of real achievement and service to humanity.

### Have You an Idea?

The job seeker who waits to attach himself to the old routine may succeed because his capabilities are such as to make him essential. But the man with a new idea in newspapermaking is likely, if his idea be a good one, to find his place more quickly than the one who waits to be assigned to an old task that somebody else may be doing acceptably.

Journalism is far from a static thing. New ideas are being daily developed. Blessed is the man or the woman who can discover a new one of quality.—*The Ohio Newspaper.*

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# WHO «» WHAT «» WHERE

WILLMOORE KENDALL, Jr., formerly an apprentice reporter on the *Tulsa Tribune*, and now instructor in Spanish at the University of Illinois, was chosen a Rhodes scholar to Oxford University, England, at New Orleans, Dec. 12, in competition with students and graduates from southwestern and southern colleges and universities.

Kendall was a high-school graduate at 13 years of age, was a cub reporter and feature writer on the *Tulsa Tribune* at 14, a college graduate at 18, received a Master's degree at 19, and was an instructor in a university at 20. He was a student in journalism at the University of Oklahoma in 1924-25. He received a B.A. degree at the University of Oklahoma in 1927, and a Master's from Northwestern University in 1928, and since that time taught one year in Oklahoma Military Academy, Claremore, and a year and a half in the University of Illinois.

Kendall's father is Rev. Willmoore Kendall, blind Methodist pastor at Miami, Okla. Kendall's ambition is to be an editor—and to help cement the United States and her Latin American neighbors with bonds of mutual friendship and understanding. He will enroll at the University of Oxford next September.

Kendall is the third former staff member of the *Tulsa Tribune* and the third former journalism student of the University of Oklahoma to be selected as a Rhodes scholar.

SAVOIE LOTTINVILLE, former reporter on the *Tulsa Tribune*, former editor of the *Oklahoma Daily*, student newspaper of the University of Oklahoma and a graduate of the school of journalism at the university, is now enrolled at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. JOSEPH A. BRANDT, former city editor of the *Tulsa Tribune*, a former editor of the *Oklahoma Daily*, and present editor of the University Press at Norman, attended Oxford for three years as a Rhodes scholar, and received the B. Litt. degree. He also is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma school of journalism.—Sooner State Press.

CHARLES E. SNYDER (Iowa State Associate), editor of the *Chicago Daily Drovers Journal* and national president of Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalistic fraternity, was a featured speaker at a smoker given by the Northwestern University chapter of the fraternity December 15. Speakers in addition to Snyder were H. N. SWANSON (Grinnell '22), editor of *College Humor* magazine; H. F. HARRINGTON (Ohio State Associate), dean of the Medill School of Journalism; ALBERT W. BATES

(Oregon State '29), executive secretary of Sigma Delta Chi, and PAUL POTTER (Iowa State '21), farm editor of the *Chicago Tribune*.

Among other alumni present were HOWARD CLARK (Grinnell Associate), vice-president, Commerce Publishing Company; COLIN KENNEDY (Iowa State '28), financial editor, *Drovers Journal*; EDWARD R. EGGER (Missouri '18), Chicago Rapid Transit Lines; JOHN F. RYAN (Montana '27); JOHN D. WILSON (Iowa State '29), secretary Chicago Alumni Chapter, and WILSON DE ARMAN (Baylor '31), graduate student, Medill School of Journalism.

HORACE COON (Columbia '23) is the author of a first novel, "Forever Engaged," which is being published in February by William Godwin, Inc., of New York. It is the story of the gradual transition of an ultra-respectable, strictly moral girl through a number of stages to the point where she reaches the position of what amounts to being a "kept" lady. Following his graduation from Columbia, Mr. Coon joined the staff of the *Troy, N. Y., Record*. He then did free-lance work in New York and for three years was publicity man for the Wolfsohn Musical Bureau. For the last five years he has been an instructor in English in University Extension, Columbia University.

PARKE F. KEAYS, former business manager of the *Custer County Chief*, Broken Bow, Nebr., has been named secretary of the Nebraska Press Association to succeed the late Ole Buck. Mr. Keays is 27 years old. He entered the University of Nebraska in the fall of 1923, attending that institution two years. In June, 1925, he became assistant cashier of the Illinois Pipe Line Co. at Casper, Wyo. In March, 1926, he became associated with the *Custer County Chief* as bookkeeper, collector and office assistant. He later was put in charge of the business and advertising departments.

WILLIAM J. KELLY (Columbia), formerly a member of the New York bureau of International News Service, has been transferred to the Columbus, O., bureau. Before going to the New York bureau, where he was assigned to a number of major stories, Kelly served as a copy reader on the *Republican-Journal*, of Ogdensburg, N. Y., and the *Daily Times*, of Watertown, N. Y.

JAMES K. TOLER, JR. (Louisiana '27), after five years as correspondent for the Associated Press in Jackson, Miss., has been transferred to the New Orleans bureau of that organization.

CARLOS T. PARSONS (Florida '29) has been named editor of the *Florida Municipal Record* and assistant secretary of the Florida League of Municipalities with headquarters in the Lynch Building at Jacksonville, Fla. Prior to accepting his present post, Parsons was night city editor of the *Florida Times-Union*, of Jacksonville.

CHARLES E. MUNSON (Colorado '30) has been placed in charge of the recently established bureau of the Associated Press at Albuquerque, N. M., and will handle New Mexico state news under the direction of the state bureau correspondent at Santa Fe.

ALBURN D. WEST (Colorado) is editor and business manager of the *Monitor* at Englewood, Colo., a Denver suburb. He formerly was advertising manager of the *Delta, Colo., Independent*.

BERNARD L. LIVINGSTONE (Missouri '29), Associated Press staff member at Little Rock, Ark., has been transferred to the Cleveland, O., bureau of that organization.

MILLARD COPE (Missouri '27), publisher of the *Sweetwater (Texas) Daily Reporter*, married Miss Margaret Kilgore, at San Angelo, Texas, Dec. 12.

CHARLES McCABE (Ohio State Associate) is in the Chicago bureau of the United Press.

HARLAN V. HADLEY (Butler '31) has joined the staff of the *Wall Street Journal*, New York City. He is residing at 448 Riverside Drive, New York.

JOHN R. VAN SICKLE (Illinois '31) is editor and publisher of the *Durand Gazette*, a weekly, at Durand, Ill.

ALEX BARROW DASPIT (Louisiana '29), Rhodes scholar from Louisiana, is studying at Keble College, Oxford, England.

PAUL GESNER (Columbia '27) contributed an article entitled "The Morning After" to the October issue of *Forum*.

RAYMOND C. NICHOLS (Kansas State '21) is representing the Meredith Publishing Company (Better Homes & Gardens; Successful Farming) on the Pacific Coast instead of RAYMOND F. NICHOLS (Kansas '26), as incorrectly reported in *THE QUILL* for December. Mr. Nichols' offices are at 530 Russ Building, San Francisco.

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